

Bloomington Youth Basketball Coaching Tips

Expectations from Bloomington Youth Basketball Staff

- Communication! Communication! Communication!
 - Phone calls to parents
 - Introduce yourself and practice information
 - Reminders of game and or practice changes
 - Reminder about pictures, banquets, tournament games
 - Practice conversations with parents and players
 - Next practice reminders
 - Next game reminders
 - Things to work on at home
 - Individual tips for players
 - Drink and snacks if needed
 - Communication at games
 - Teaching and instructing of players
 - Encouragement of players at all times
 - Team huddle after game
 - Be active and involved
- Organized and Prepared
 - Practice plans
 - Concept of what drills and skills to teach
 - On time to games and practices
- Fair
 - Treat and work with all kids the same
 - Teach all players all skills
 - Encourage both the best and worst players on your team
- Sportsmanship
 - Teach your players to respect the other team and officials
 - Lead by example
 - Do not yell or berate officials for missed calls- they are doing the best they can.

Advice given by Andrew Hodson- Bloomington North Basketball Coach

- Instill great Sportsmanship in the players. Many players have been brought up watching trash talking and selfish basketball. Teach them to respect their opponents and the game.
- Teach team play. The goal should be to have more kids that love the game and want to play together. With the maturation process no one knows who will be the main scoring options. The pass is just as important as the shot. Teach players to

point to each other for good passes, stand up and cheer on the bench, give high fives, huddle together. The fun of the game comes from building team camaraderie.

- Make the players' experience enjoyable and productive. If practice is all about fun and games players will have a hard time adjusting to the demands of a high school coach. High school basketball is very competitive and practices are for working hard, instruction, and improving. Teach players that working hard and giving every ounce of energy for a common goal is the fun part.
- Be their coach, role model, and authority figure. Players have to learn that the coach's vision is reality. They should treat their coach as an authority figure, and willingly abide by the coach's rules. Many coaches try to be best buddies with their players, which makes for a hard transition to high school, because the high school coaches are so demanding.
- Teach the fundamentals to everyone. That 5-10 youth post player that is averaging 20 points a game on post moves may stop growing and have to be a guard to survive in high school. Teach them all how to dribble (with one and two balls), pass (with right and left hand), and shoot with proper form. Teach them perimeter moves and post moves. It will make all of them a well rounded player.
- Teach them basic offenses like down-screen, cross screen motion and Flex. Players have to be able to run plays when they get to high school. Basketball I.Q. is developed in youth leagues. They have to be able to think through the game, not just play the game.
- Teach players how to shoot properly. BEEF-Balance-feet shoulder width apart, Elbow in, Eyes on the rim, and proper Follow through with a hand in the cookie jar. Many players want to shoot 3's and they produce terrible form. Don't let them shoot a 3 until they can shoot it the same way they shoot a 10' shot. Make sure that players are square to the basket, do not under pivot or over pivot, and make sure that they shoot with one hand and a guide hand. Many players push the ball with their thumb, which causes problems.
- Youth coaches have the most important job for the development of a player's basketball career. Habits are formed at an early age and bad habits are hard to break as they get older. Develop their fundamental skills. We see players who put little time into developing the fundamental parts of their game, because they are playing so many games all across the country. Basketball players are made in the driveway, not made on game night.

The following ideas are referenced from:
Jim Garland's "*The Baffled Parent's Guide to Great Basketball Drills*"

Promoting Teamwork & a Positive Environment

As a coach your most important job is to create an environment that promotes team unity and team spirit. This is accomplished by understanding that you now have a group of kids with different skills, needs and interest and you must guide them to work together, to blend their talents yet appreciating them as individuals. As I'm sure you know each coach has their own style and philosophies on the game, but the main idea of practice should be that drills involve lots of movement and touches to on the ball. A coach must not only get players but their parents enthusiastic about the team by creating an atmosphere that is fun and supportive not dictatorial. Let your players know that it is OK to make mistakes and that it is more important how they deal with those mistakes. Just know that praise and encouragement will always get you further than yelling or tearing down your players. Yes, coaching does involve criticism, but make your criticism constructive and **never** let your players or your parents criticize other players or officials.

Involving Parents & Players

We have come to the conclusion that during your first practice it is a good idea to conduct a "team meeting," involving both the players and their parents. Discuss what your expectations are for the season, this is a chance for you to promote good sportsmanship, showing up on time, and behaving appropriately during practice, games and in life. This is a good opportunity to involve the players and their parents by asking them what their expectations are for the season, concerns about their children and how they would like to participate. This is also a time to let your kids know that they are expected to have goals, whether small or large it gives you the coach something to go on. Have them write down their goals and bring them to the next practice, this gives you something to reference throughout the season, and something to talk about at the end of the season.

Remember that you are the coach and this is the time to reaffirm to your kids and parents that they must respect that role. Make sure the players and parents are aware of your quest to be as fair as possible, this helps to promote a "we" or "team" atmosphere and to start to develop a bond with everyone involved.

Winning & Losing

Having a winning and losing team in each game is a reality. If you allow your team to focus on winning as a main objective, you are setting your team up for failure. Instead, if you emphasize clearly defined goals during each practice and game, you will teach your players to broaden their prospective on the game, improve their skills, and to allow them to experience the fun and excitement of a team game. Remember that your players and parents will take their cues from you; it is your responsibility to provide a good example for them to follow. Emphasize team goals, respect of others (players, coaches, officials, parents, equipment etc.) not just winning individual games.

Practice

How practices are organized affect a player's attention span. Some techniques to try: "Huddle" when speaking to the entire group. Make eye contact to see who is paying attention. Stand next to or have your more "active" players sit closer to you when talking. Leave the ball out of the "huddle" all together, or have the kids sit crossed legged with the ball sitting on top and each players hand to their side. Plan to have more drills than time will allow, sometimes drills will run short and you need to be able to change drills quickly. Here are Jim Garland's 10 Rules of Practice:

1. **Maintain a safe environment:** Have players remove jewelry, have a list of parents phone numbers, know where first aid is located
2. **Choose appropriate activities:** Warm-ups & Cool-downs are a good idea to stretch the muscles gradually.
3. **Provide opportunities for hundreds of touches:** Encourage individual, small group and small-sided game activities to increase touches to the ball
4. **Provide opportunities for creativity and problem solving:** Use drills that challenge your players to keep them interested and involved
5. **Provide opportunities for skill development:** Explain the purpose of the drill, demonstrate it, slowly run the players through the drill, use the skill in a no-pressure situation, then provide more pressure gradually
6. **Provide game like activities:** The more you can provide a game like environment in practice the better your kids will do in game situations
7. **Include small-sided games:** Players love two-on-two, three-on-two etc., this develops endurance and provides many touches, it also gets all of the kids involved by "subbing" different players all the time
8. **Provide lots of scoring opportunities:** All players want to score, use drills where players have the opportunity to score multiple times
9. **Have Fun!:** Set time aside to just have fun, you have to be creative with these drills as you want the players to think it's not a drill. For example: dribble tag or knockout, but stress just because they are having fun that they don't stray from using proper fundamentals when participating
10. **Players should leave practice feeling good about themselves:** everything else you do as a coach doesn't matter unless your players feel good about themselves and what they are doing